

Statement of Grattan Puxon
On behalf of the appellant
1st

dated:
Exhibits 'GP 1' – 'GP 6'

IN THE SOUTHEND COUNTY COURT

CLAIM NO. 0BQ00930

BETWEEN

BARBARA SHERIDAN

Appellant

and

BASILDON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Respondent

WITNESS STATEMENT OF
GRATTAN PUXON

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Statement of Grattan Puxon
On behalf of the appellant
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Dated:
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Appellant

and

BASILDON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Respondent

WITNESS STATEMENT OF GRATTAN PUXON

I, Grattan Puxon, of 1 John Harper Street, Colchester, Secretary of the Dale Farm Housing Association (DFHA), make the following statement, having communicated with the Respondent on behalf of this association and having access to the association's records:

1. I wrote to Ms Dawn French, Head of Development at Basildon District Council on 18 June 2009 as part of my ongoing efforts to seek suitable alternative land for residents of Dale Farm to move to lawfully. This particular letter referred to a site at the corner of East Mayne and Cranes Farm Road, Basildon which was being offered for sale. I received a response letter from the Council dated 26 June 2009. Marked 'GP 1' I exhibit a true copy of my letter and a true copy of the advertisement for this which to the best of my knowledge and belief I provided to the Council, and a copy of the Council's reply.
2. On 14 July 2009 Richard Sheridan, chair of DFHA, wrote to Ms Dawn French at the Council with respect to land at Witham as a possible alternative for families at Dale Farm. I exhibit 'GP 2' a copy of the letter and of the sale/letting particulars.

3. On 28 August 2009 I wrote to Mr Clive Simpson, Manager of Planning Services, concerning four further sites that we had located, namely land at Fyfield, Navestockside, Purfleet, and Sandon and I exhibit 'GP 3' a copy of the letter and of the advertisements and particulars that I provided with respect to each location.
4. It is apparent that there is racism and hostility felt and expressed towards residents of Dale Farm from the local settled community from comments in the local press. From my conversations with residents on Dale Farm I can confirm that residents are well aware of this racial hostility sentiment, and are aware albeit by word of mouth of this sentiment as expressed in letters/comments from local residents published in the local paper, the Basildon Echo and on its website.
5. The comments in these articles include reference to Dale Farm residents as "Pikeys", "scum" and "scum bags". One commentator on the article states "It won't be long before people take things into their own hands" and "just think how many henchmen we could hire!!!". Earlier on in the same list of comments a commentator refers to Dale Farm residents as "tax dodgers, benefit scroungers, thieves, con artists, smugglers, relatives of rapists etc.", which is followed by a comment stating "Why is everyone so nice to an enemy army, if they were in Afghanistan they would have been bombed by now".
6. In April 2010 I became aware that the land at Gardiners Lane South, which had been given outline planning permission for a large housing development scheme, had become available and that the scheme would not be going ahead for at least five years. I exhibit at 'GP 4' the article from the Basildon Echo making this announcement. As a result of this announcement Richard Sheridan, chair of the DFHA wrote a letter to Dawn French (Project Leader for Dale Farm at Basildon District council) on 10 May 2010 (letter exhibited hereto marked 'GP 5'), proposing this land as a possible alternative for residents on Dale Farm so as to facilitate a peaceful vacation of the Dale Farm site and seeking a meeting with Dawn French and planning officers to discuss this option.

7. Basildon District Council subsequently responded to Richard Sheridan's 10 May 2010 letter in an e-mail from Carla Vivekanandan (Corporate Projects, Basildon District Council) stating that they would be able to get officers together for such a meeting as proposed but that it would take a while to do so. However, nothing further was heard about the proposal and the meeting and as a result, I wrote to Bala Mahendran (Chief Executive of Basildon District Council) on 10 August 2010, letter at exhibit 'GP6', referring to the Gardiners Lane South proposal and Carla Vivekanandan's e-mail in relation to the meeting, and asking when the meeting would be taking place. At the time of preparing this statement I had not yet had a reply to my letter.
8. The Homes and Communities Agency has encouraged DFHA to submit planning applications for Gardiners Lane South and also at Pound Lane which is about 2 hectares and also owed by the HCA. Concerning the land at Pound Lane, I am expecting we will be submitting the planning application within a matter of days.

Statement of Truth

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☐ I believe that the facts stated in this statement are true.

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☐ Signed:



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Grattan Puxon

☐ Date:23 August 2010.....

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